

CAUCASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

though quick transplantation of Western systems into those semi-Asiatic regions might be doubted, yet genuine effort was made to make democracy a success. All these republics established parliaments, based on universal suffrage for men and women without national or religious discrimination. Thus, for example, the parliament of Azerbaijan, composed of 120 members, had not only the Azerbaijan-Tatar deputies, but also a strong national minorities' representation including 20 Armenians, 10 Russians, and a few Poles and Jews. All three republics had governments emanating from respective parliamentary majorities, which, in turn, were composed of Social Democrats. In the Georgian Assembly Social Democrats (Mensheviks) controlled 109 seats of a total of 130.^o In Armenia the controlling party was that of the Dashnaks (*Dashnaksutiuri*), also of a socialist character. In Azerbaijan the government was in the hands of Musavatists, of a similar political tendency. "While in Russia proper the Bolshevik, internationalist wing of the Social Democrats was gaining ground and was swept into power by the November Revolution, the Transcaucasian states, long oppressed by tsarist Russia, could hardly be expected to adopt a political philosophy that would ignore nationalism. In their desire to establish sound democracy in Transcaucasia, the three governments carried out several reforms in order to break the undue influence and privileges of certain groups. In Georgia the National Church separated itself not only from the Russian Orthodox Church, but also from the state; and a Layman's Committee was put in charge of the church's funds and properties. Steps were also taken to curb the economic

predominance of big
landowners. In Tiflis a university was
created.

The independence of the Transcaucasian
republics was precarious.
The presence of Allied troops was essential to
their security. Yet the
republics made no serious attempt to unite
again into some form of
federation for the purpose of defense against
external aggressors.
Instead, petty quarrels broke out between
Azerbaijan and Armenia
with respect to contested territories. The
nationalistic feelings of all
three states were gratified when, on January
13, 1920, the inde-
pendence of Georgia and Azerbaijan was
recognized *de facto* by the
Supreme Allied Council, followed, on April 23
of the same year, by

eV. D. Dumbadze, *The Caucasian Republics* (New York, 1925),
p. 14.